

Shell
Answer #
Book **7**

THE DRIVING EMERGENCY BOOK

How to react to seven dangerous surprises
while behind the wheel



By Nancy Curry, Shell Dealer Representative



**Come to
Shell for answers**

Would you know what to do if you had to face any of these seven emergencies? I found the answers, and went to a test track to try them out.

Panic is your enemy. It can kill you.

Emergency plans, like the ones in this book, are panic preventers. If you have them in the back of your mind, you can take life-saving action instead of just panicking.

I got answers from the National Safety Council on what to do when certain things go wrong. Then I actually tried out those emergency actions as realistically as I could. For safety we used stunt drivers, special cars, and a test track. But the actual emergency procedures themselves can be done by anyone. Of course, you have to decide for yourself what to do in a particular situation. But I think you'll agree, there are very valuable ideas here.



To demonstrate what to do when brakes fail, we used a special car with two sets of controls. When the brakes were disconnected, I brought the car to a safe stop using the first three steps of the emergency procedure: Pump. Park. Shift. I saved Swipe for a real emergency.

Q. My brakes don't work! What can I do?

A. Use these brake-failure car stoppers. Pump. Park. Shift. Swipe.

1. *Pump* the brake pedal. Sometimes the pressure comes back.

2. *Park* means the parking brake. Use it. But don't jam it on hard if you're on a curve. That can cause a spin.

3. *Shift* into a lower gear (or lower range on your automatic). The drag of the engine will slow you down.

Do all three as fast as you can. Then, as a last resort:

4. *Sideswipe* something — a guardrail, a curb, even parked cars. The indirect blow is better than hitting a brick wall or an oncoming car. And damaged metal is better than damaged people.

Note: When we tried the first three steps at the test track, it took about *four times* as far as a normal stop. That means you have to react quickly.

Q. Blowout! How do I handle it?

A. We had an explosives expert rig a charge to my left front tire and actually blow it out as I drove along the test track. (See photo inset at upper right.)

When a front tire blows, your car gets pulled hard to the side of the blowout. Mine jerked the car across the yellow line of our "highway" and I



When a front tire blows, it pulls the car toward the blowout side. In the inset you can see the flash of the explosion we used to intentionally blow the tire.

had to steer back into my own lane. (See photo above.)

The steering wheel vibrates a lot. *Hang on tight.* Don't panic. Stay off the brake. If you jam it on, you could lose control completely. Get off

the gas and *concentrate* on staying in your lane. Then gradually slow down and pull well off the road.

If a rear tire blows, the back of the car will vibrate and weave back and forth. Handle it the same way.



About the author

**Nancy Curry, Shell Dealer
Representative, Indianapolis, Indiana**

"As a Shell Dealer Representative, I do a lot of driving. I average more than 100 miles per working day. But I'm not a 'professional driver' or a stunt driver.

"So to prepare this booklet, I got facts from the National Safety Council on how ordinary drivers can protect themselves.

"Then I worked with stunt drivers and special cars at a test track to make emergencies happen and actually practice the procedures I had learned.

"They work. Before this test I had been through a sudden brake failure and a bad skid while driving on my job—and got by on luck. Next time I'll know what to do."

Q. That car's coming right at me! What do I do?

A. Right is usually the right way. Try to escape to the right. (See below.)



① Almost anything is better than a head-on collision. Chances of surviving are not good.

② If you dodge to the left, the other driver might correct back into that lane at the last second.

③ Swerve to the *right*. Even if you have to hit something on the roadside or another car going the way you are. You might tear up your car, but chances are you'll survive.

While you dodge, blow the horn. And, of course, if you can't avoid a collision, brake hard. Every mile per hour you can slow down will reduce the impact.

Q. My accelerator is stuck! What now?

A. First, you might be able to get the accelerator *unstuck*. Try pulling it up with the toe of your shoe. Or maybe a passenger in the car can reach down and pull it up. Don't take your eyes

Forewarned is forearmed: a preparedness checklist

Make it a habit to ask yourself these questions when you get behind the wheel.

- ☐ 1. Am I very tired? Or sick?
- ☐ 2. Have I been drinking? Or taking pills that make me groggy?
- ☐ 3. Where am I going? Should I be ready for dangerous roads?
- ☐ 4. How's the weather? How will it be on the way back?
- ☐ 5. How are the other drivers? Am I likely to encounter sleepy ones? Or drunk ones?

Then ask these questions about your car.

- ☐ 1. How are the brakes? Does the pedal go more than half-

way to the floor? Does it continue to sink under pressure?

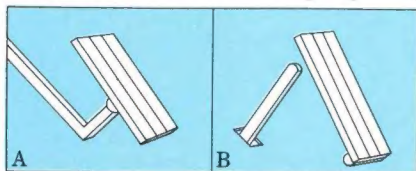
- ☐ 2. Is the parking brake working?
- ☐ 3. Are the wear indicators on the tires showing?
- ☐ 4. Are all the lights working?
- ☐ 5. Are the windshield wipers, washers, and washer fluid all in good order?
- ☐ 6. Does the horn honk?
- ☐ 7. Is the tire pressure right?
- ☐ 8. Are the shock absorbers in good shape?
- ☐ 9. Are any fluids leaking?
- ☐ 10. Are the drive belts frayed, cracked, or loose?
- ☐ 11. Is there enough power steering fluid?

off the road to reach down yourself.

If you can't get the accelerator unstuck, you can shift into neutral or press down the clutch. The engine will race on by itself while you pull off and stop.

Warning: If you turn off the key, some cars will lose power steering or even lock the steering wheel.

We didn't have to purposely



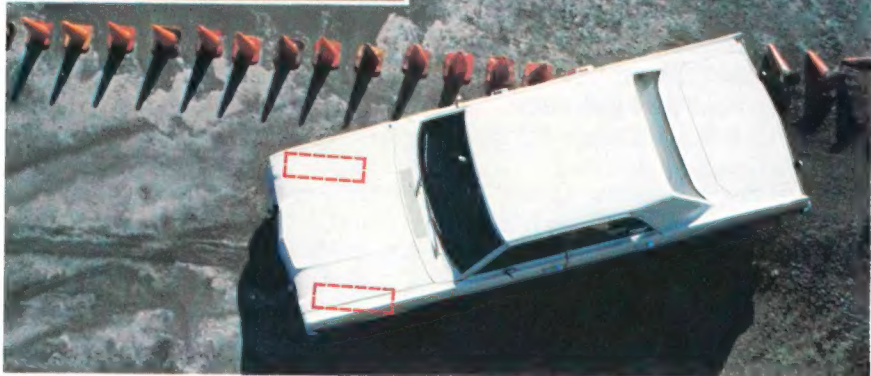
Two kinds of accelerator linkage. On some cars the pedal is firmly attached to the linkage that goes to the engine (A). On others, the pedal only rests on the linkage (B). You could lift the pedal but the throttle would stay stuck down. Check your car in advance so you'll know what to do.

demonstrate this emergency at the test track. Believe it or not, the accelerator on our dual-control car actually did stick unexpectedly! I pulled it back up with my foot.

Q. I'm starting to skid sideways! How do I regain control?

A. In a skid, the panic reaction is to slam on the brakes. *Don't.* That will cause you to lose control completely. Instead, take your foot off the gas and turn the wheels *into* the skid as shown in the photo below. This will help straighten out the car and regain traction.

Sometimes the car will snap back too fast and start skidding the other way. Be ready to whip the steering wheel back around to straighten it out again.



With a stunt driver at the other wheel, I purposely skidded on a wet surface. Then, by taking my foot off the gas, staying off the brake, and turning the wheels in the direction shown, I got the car straightened out and regained control.



Q. If my car falls into deep water, how do I get out?

A. Accidents like this happen to more than 3,000 people each year.

Get out the window. Quick. The way the stunt driver is doing it in the pictures above.

His car is sinking fast. Many will float, perhaps for several minutes. Use that time to escape, *before* the car goes under. Power windows might short-circuit in the water, so open them right away.

If you can't get out the window, the door is the next best bet. At first, water pressure will hold it closed. But don't panic. As the passenger compartment fills with water, the pressure will be equalized and you can open the door.

But remember, the door is the *second-best* way out. If you can get out the window, don't wait.

Incidentally, I let the stunt driver do this one alone. I stayed on the dock and took notes.

Check the Shell line for the right motor oil for your car.



Shell X-100® single grades are available in SAE 10W, 20W-20, 30 and 40. Each meets the warranty service requirements of every U.S. car and most foreign cars.

Shell X-100 Multigrade is an SAE 10W-40 all-season oil offering excellent high-temperature protection plus good low-temperature startability. Meets or exceeds warranty requirements.

Shell Super X® earns the 10W-50 rating, the widest multigrade range you can buy. Helps protect today's hotter running engines. Exceeds warranty requirements.

Q. The hood flew up! What should I do?

A. Obviously, you have to stop. But on a crowded road, jamming on the brakes might be the *worst* thing



to do. Try to stop smoothly and pull off. On many cars you can see by peeking through the opening between the hood and the dashboard. (See photo, top.)

If that won't work on your car, lean out the window, as shown above.

Check which vantage point is best in your car next time you have the hood open.



A Hollywood stunt driver's number one safety tip

Use your safety belt. Stunt driver Wally Crowder told me: "I wreck cars for a living. I know what goes on during a crackup. That's why I *always* wear a safety belt. My little boy wears his, too."

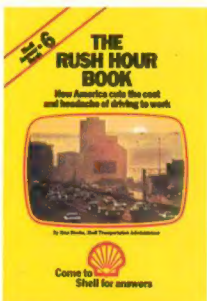
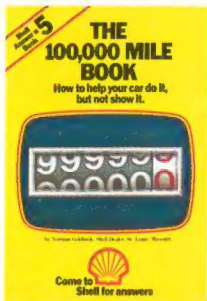
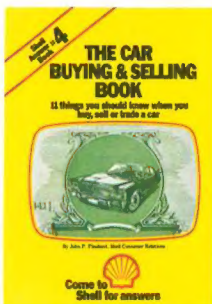
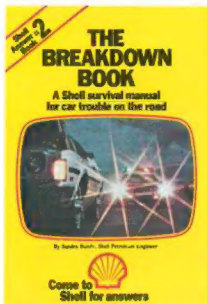
Shoulder straps provide an additional margin of safety.

Q. Any more questions?

A. Write me.

I'll be glad to tell you more about what we did in our "emergency workshop" or the things I learned

from the National Safety Council. Just write "Driving Emergency," P.O. Box 61609, Houston, Texas 77208.



How to get more answers from Shell. Other books in the Shell Answer Series are available from many Shell Dealers. Or you can write Shell Answer Books, P.O. Box 61609, Houston, Texas 77208. Books on new subjects will be out soon.

Shell would like to thank the National Safety Council for its cooperation. This booklet is based on information from the Council and has been reviewed by it. These are general recommendations that we believe will be helpful in many emergencies. Since every emergency is different, the individual driver must decide what to do in any particular case.



**Come to
Shell for answers**

**Shell
Answer #
Book** **8**

THE CAR REPAIR SHOPPING BOOK

**What the driver and mechanic can do
to take the hassle out of car repairs**



by Howard Judson, Shell Consumer Relations Manager



**Come to
Shell for answers**

Save this book. It has information you'll want when your car needs repair.

Car repairs are one of the main sources of consumer complaints. They're also a source of apprehension because people often don't know what's wrong or where to go for help. But it doesn't have to be that way.

I talked with top consumer activists and leaders in the car repair industry. They suggested ways to increase your chances of getting the job done right at the right price. Whether you choose an automobile dealership, service station, independent mechanic, specialty shop or whatever, these steps can help minimize your uneasiness.

Q. What should I look for in a good repair outlet?

A. Choose a place and a mechanic like you'd choose a hospital and a doctor. Find a facility you trust. Someplace right for *you*. Here are seven things to look for.

Reputation. Good places live by it. Do you know anyone who has used them? Ask your Better Business Bureau if there are complaints against them.

Qualifications. Are the mechanics experienced? Certified? Licensed?

Equipment. Do they appear to have the proper tools to do the job?



American consumers spend over 35 billion dollars a year on car repairs. How much will you spend this year? Maybe not as much if you follow the advice in this book.

Neatness. Cleanliness and order usually go with efficient mechanics. **Convenience.** Are they close to home or work? Will you have transportation while your car's tied up?

Estimates. Will they give one in writing?

Guarantees. Do they back up their work in writing? And what does the guarantee cover?

A repair outlet doesn't have to excel in *every* category. Just try to find out as much as you can before you hand over your car.

Q. How important is a written estimate?

A. Very. It's the best safeguard against the "five o'clock surprise" — paying more than you expected. Check the estimate closely. Make sure each repair item is listed separately. If a tune-up is involved, be sure you know precisely what "tune-up" includes.

Always be sure a notation is made on the estimate to call you in

About the author

Howard Judson, Shell's Manager of Consumer Relations, is a graduate mechanical engineer, with a Masters Degree from Columbia University. He has 30 years' varied experience in the oil industry in this country and overseas as well.



In 1973 he formed the first Consumer Relations Department in Shell Oil Company. Howard is a member of both the Society of Consumer Affairs Professionals and the Conference of Consumer Organizations.



The National Institute for Automotive Service Excellence offers a certification program. The mechanic takes tests on different systems of the car. If he passes the tests and has at least two years of practical experience, he is certified and entitled to wear shoulder patches that show his expertise. And his place of business can display the NIASE sign.

advance for approval if additional work is necessary. Have the person who writes the estimate sign it and get a copy for yourself.

If you ask for diagnostic work, expect to pay for it.

Q. Just what does "certified" mechanic mean?

A. It generally means the mechanic has passed tests on car repair. Tests prepared and given by auto manufacturers, oil companies, related industry organizations, or states.

It's good to keep in mind though that many excellent mechanics may not be certified. Certification is a sign of competence, but it shouldn't be your only consideration.

Expert opinions on car repair

I interviewed four key people who represent the consumer and the business side of car repairs. Surprisingly, they often agreed on the problems involved and their solutions. What they had to say can be a big help to everyone who owns or services cars.

The consumer's side

Dr. Lee Richardson: "The real cost of repairs is far beyond the bill you get . . . There's this great uncertainty people have because they're not sure who to deal with or what should be done. They



Dr. Lee Richardson: President of the Consumer Federation of America; Chairperson, Dept. of Marketing, Louisiana State University.

feel it's like rolling the dice . . . And the consumer doesn't see any backup in the repair business. Some places may have systems in effect where the customer can bring a grievance, but they're irrelevant if the customer isn't aware of them . . . In most cities there is a place to complain. A Better Business Bureau, state, county or city consumer protection office. They can be effective.

"Car repairs is one of the most frustrating areas consumers find themselves in. Many solutions are proposed, but they just aren't clear-cut enough."



Mrs. Virginia H. Knauer: Former Special Assistant to the President for Consumer Affairs and Director of the Office of Consumer Affairs, Health, Education, and Welfare.

Mrs. Virginia H. Knauer: "The shock of getting a bill that's more than you thought it would be seems to be the biggest problem . . . But we hear a lot from consumers about the non-availability of 'loaner' cars that are advertised.

"Of all the complaints we get, only a very small percentage are about a rip-off. It's my perception that the vast majority of repair shops really try to do a decent job . . . If a consumer has a complaint he can't work out, he should see if there is an Auto Cap (Automotive Consumer Action Panel) in his state, put the complaint on record with the parent company if there is one, then check with his state Bureau of Consumer Protection or write to the Federal Office of Consumer Affairs."

The repairman's side

Richard Wagner: "If a customer has a problem following a repair job, he really doesn't know whether it's poor workmanship, product design or an additional defect. The first thing to do is identify the problem. The customer should talk to the person in charge. Not

necessarily the service manager. It should be someone away from the pressure of the service area.

"The basis of satisfactory repairs is going to someone you trust . . . The customer has responsibilities. He should work out his method of payment in advance. He should arrange for alternate transportation if repairs take a long time. He should call to be sure his car is ready before coming to get it. If he notices a problem, he should go back to the facility immediately. And not let emotion aggravate the situation."



Richard Wagner: Director, National Automobile Dealers Association and Chairman of their Public and Consumer Affairs Committee; auto dealer for 23 years.

Charles Binsted: "A consumer is better served if he selects a repair facility and builds a relationship and confidence with them . . . If you don't know car repair, you should know a mechanic."

"The industry is trying to build more competent mechanics. But public education hasn't responded as well as it

might have. In many schools the subject of auto-mechanics hasn't been given the emphasis it should.

"The customer should have a good understanding when he leaves his car for repairs. But understanding-gaps occur even with longtime customers. I



Charles Binsted: Executive Director National Congress of Petroleum Retailers; member Board of Directors, National Institute of Automotive Service Excellence; in service station business since 1946.

advise my people to call the customer and let him know if something additional is needed. Don't give him the five o'clock surprise . . . Not all people who work in service stations are mechanics. Customers shouldn't press an inexperienced man to work on their cars. It might do more harm than good."

Note to repairmen: Many of the problems voiced by consumer activists were echoed by repair representatives. You can help increase your business by being part of the solution. Remember, customers are looking for good reputation, qualified mechanics, proper equipment, written cost estimates, guaranteed work, and fair prices.

Customers also appreciate your pointing out any work they might need in the near future. If you do, chances are they'll come back to you for it. And if you find a problem that may have originated at another place, advise the customer to go back there. They may be unaware of it.

Q. What can I do to make things go smoother when I bring in my car?

A. Try to call for an appointment. There are around 100 million cars on the road and only around 800,000 mechanics. If possible, avoid requesting work for Mondays, Fridays or Saturdays, usually the busiest days. Don't try to "hurry" the mechanic. If he has the proper time, chances are he'll do a better job. And ask to see your replaced parts as proof that the work was done.

Q. How do I tell a mechanic what's wrong?

A. Don't try to tell him the *cause*. Tell him the *symptoms* – what the car is (or isn't) doing that made you bring it in. Let *him* determine the cause.

Tell *what happens*. Be specific. Does it happen all the time? Does it get worse or better under certain circumstances? Going fast or slow? Engine cold or hot? Did it start



Many car repair problems stem from misunderstandings. Don't be hesitant about asking questions. It's your car and your money.

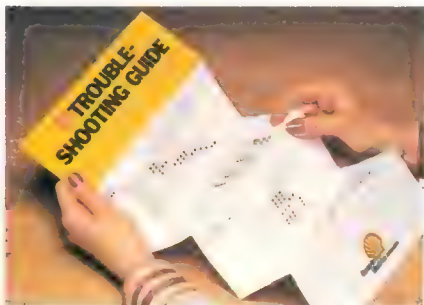
gradually or all at once? Any unusual noises? With this information, and possibly a test drive, a good mechanic will have a much better chance of pinpointing the ailment.

Q. How do I know that I'm getting a fair price?

A. If the price you are quoted is for a specific job, you can always get a second estimate. But don't jump at one price just because it's lowest.

Consider the brake job. Prices can range from \$30 to \$175 and up. Usually the higher price includes rebuilt or new wheel cylinders and machining the drums or discs.

The lower priced job might be limited to the purchase and installation of brake shoes only. Just be sure you know what the estimate



Communicate better with your mechanic. Learn more about your car. This Trouble Shooting Guide can help. It's based on information from the Automotive Information Council and gives some common causes of a car's malfunctions and their symptoms. For a free copy, write: Trouble Shooting Guide, Shell Oil Company, P.O. Box 61609, Houston, Texas 77208.

includes. And the risks involved in doing a partial job.

If the price you are quoted is an approximation, based on a particular labor rate, find out what that rate is. Labor rates vary. And so will the cost of the job.

If you're technically minded, ask to see the "flat rate manual." Many places use these as guides in determining prices.

The only sure way to feel comfortable about the price, is to feel comfortable about the place that's doing the work.

Q. What can I do if my car isn't fixed right?

A. If you're not satisfied with the way the work was done, register a complaint immediately with the people who did it. (Seeking corrective action at another place can complicate the situation.) Don't shout; just calmly tell them the problem.

If you can't reach an agreement, find out if the repair facility has arrangements with any arbitration service like the Better Business Bureau or Automotive Consumer Action Panel. If they do not, put your

Repair rip-offs at home and on the road



Mrs. Virginia H. Knauer told me, "Only a small percentage of the complaints we receive involve a rip-off. But they do generate a lot of heat." The most common rip-off is paying a lot more than you should for repairs. Or having work done that is really unnecessary. Getting a second opinion can help you avoid those problems.

Motorists on long trips are some-

times susceptible to tricks. To avoid as many as possible, have your mechanic or service station give your car a good going-over before you leave.

And when you're on the road and not sure of whom you're dealing with, it's wise to watch closely while it's being serviced.

Remember that tricks like these very rarely occur. But it never hurts to be on your guard.

Honking. Checking the air pressure, the attendant punctures your tire with a sharp tool.

Slashing. Checking under the hood, he cuts the fan belt so that it hangs by a thread.

Short Sticking. Not pushing the dipstick all the way down when checking the oil.

Shock Treatment. Oil squirted on a shock absorber to make you think the seal is broken.

Battery Boil. A seltzer tablet plunked into a battery cell neutralizes some of the acid and causes it to boil over.

Hot Oil Filter. The oil filter is terribly hot. Needs replacing. Don't believe it.

complaint in writing. Send a letter to the place you had the problem with, copies to city, state or federal consumer protection bureaus, or the Better Business Bureau.

Don't threaten; don't be apologetic. Just state the facts as you know them. Give your name, address and telephone number; the name and location of the facility; make and model of the car; and a total of how much the problem has cost you. Be sure to keep a copy for yourself.

Usually this type of letter will get some action. If it doesn't, consider Small Claims Court. You usually don't need a lawyer there.

Q. Any questions?

A. Answers to many questions on maintaining your car can be found in your owner's manual. Read it well. If you have any questions on the contents of this book, write: Howard Judson, Shell Oil Company, P.O. Box 61609, Houston, Texas 77208.



How to get more answers from Shell. Get these books in the Shell Answer Series. *The Early Warning Book, The Breakdown Book, The Gasoline Mileage Book, The Car Buying and Selling Book, The 100,000 Mile Book, The Rush Hour Book, The Driving Emergency Book.* They're available at many Shell Dealers. Or write Shell Answer Books, P.O. Box 61609, Houston, Texas 77208. Books on new subjects will be out soon.



**Come to
Shell for answers**

Shell
Answer # **9**
Book

THE CAR CRIME PREVENTION BOOK

How to fight back before you get ripped off



By Al Brooks, Manager, Shell Corporate Security



**Come to
Shell for answers**

I asked a former car thief, a police sergeant, and a car-theft victim to suggest ways to keep your car off the thieves' shopping lists.

A million cars were stolen in the United States last year. Millions more were vandalized or stripped. Read how to fight back before you become part of the statistics.

Q. My car's nothing special. Why would anybody steal it?

A. A car doesn't have to be new and shiny to be tempting. A former professional car thief revealed, "I didn't care what kind of car it was, as long as it moved and was easy to steal."

Even though your car is ordinary, the professional thief may have his eye on it simply because his car-theft ring has an order for one like it or a ready market for the parts. And an older car is worth more these days — the market value of used cars is way up.

Q. If a thief wants my car, there's nothing I can do. Right?

A. Wrong. According to the F.B.I., most cars are stolen by "amateurs." And they're stolen because they're easy to steal.

Eighty percent of all the cars stolen last year were unlocked at the time. Believe it or not, **forty percent** actually had the keys sitting right there in the ignition.

If you lock up and pocket the keys, most amateurs won't bother

breaking in. It's easier to "shop" for another car.

In Boston, 120,000 motorists have joined "Hands-Off-This-Car" (H.O.T. Car), an antitheft campaign sponsored by WNAC-TV, ALA Auto & Travel Club, and WRKO radio. H.O.T. Car teaches simple but effective ways to fight car theft — like the tips in this book. Car theft was down a whopping 23 percent last year in the Boston area.

Although you can't make your car *impossible* to steal (a professional thief can get it if he really wants it), you can make it tough.

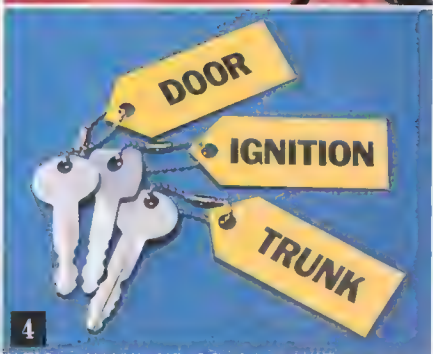
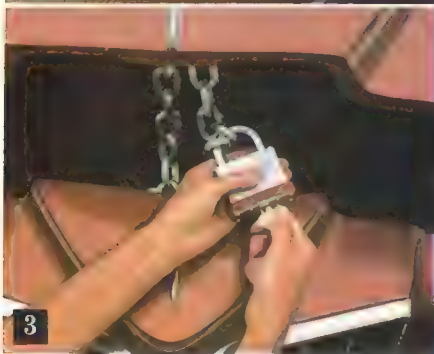
About the author



Former F.B.I. special agent Al Brooks has been head of Shell corporate security eight years. His job includes the protection of company assets and crime investigation at Shell. Brooks also helped produce an executive protection film used by many companies.

What did he pick up from his research for this guide? "A car-theft victim feels like any other crime victim. He's been attacked personally. And it's too late to fight back."

Believe it or not, even Brooks has had a car stolen. "A couple of years ago I returned a rental car and left the keys in the trunk lock like they requested. A month later I had a call: what had I done with the car? Some thief had a pretty clever racket going — until the car rental companies caught on."



Four ways to make it tough for a car thief: 1. Tapered door lock buttons 2. Antitheft device warning decal 3. Hood lock 4. Different locks for ignition, doors, and trunk.

Q. Sure I lock the doors, but what else can I do?

A. Take these tips from Sergeant Edward Lamb, Boston Police Crime Prevention Unit:

1. Roll the windows up *tight*.
2. Store spare keys in your wallet, not in the car. A professional thief *knows* all the hiding places.
3. Replace standard door lock buttons with the slim, tapered kind. They're almost impossible to pull up with a coat hanger.
4. In the driveway, park your car with the nose toward the street, so anyone tampering with the engine can be seen more easily.

5. No matter how quick the errand, never leave your car running. Not even in the driveway. Sergeant Lamb said, "Many amateur thieves hang out at convenience stores just waiting for an unattended car with the engine running."

6. Install different locks for door, ignition, and trunk. Then a thief who gets your door key still won't have the ignition. And a lot attendant who uses your ignition key can't use it on the trunk.

Rule of thumb: Make it time-consuming to steal your car, and the thief will probably try his luck on someone else's.



Boston Police Sergeant Edward Lamb demonstrates how the department's computer can check out a suspicious car within a few seconds after a patrolman radios in the report.

Q. Do those antitheft devices really work?

A. They're not infallible. But some are good enough to earn discounts on car-theft insurance in Boston.

Here's a sampler of antitheft



Our former car thief told me that the first thing he looked for was an antitheft device warning decal in the window: "I didn't hang around to see if the sticker was telling the truth or not."

devices that should foil the amateur and hamper the pro:

Kill switch. Like having a second ignition switch. Car won't start unless hidden switch is activated.

Alarm system. Loud warning alarm sounds an alert if car is tampered with or jostled.

Fuel switch. Closes a valve that cuts off the fuel supply.

Armored collar. A metal shield that locks around steering column and covers ignition.

Crook lock. Bar locks steering wheel to brake pedal.

Antitheft devices range from about \$10 to \$100. Once you've bought one, let an expert install it. Do-it-yourself jobs are usually easier to defeat. When you buy a new car, check the manufacturer's list of options for antitheft devices.

How does a former car thief protect his car? The one I inter-

viewed uses tapered door lock buttons, a kill switch, *and* an alarm.

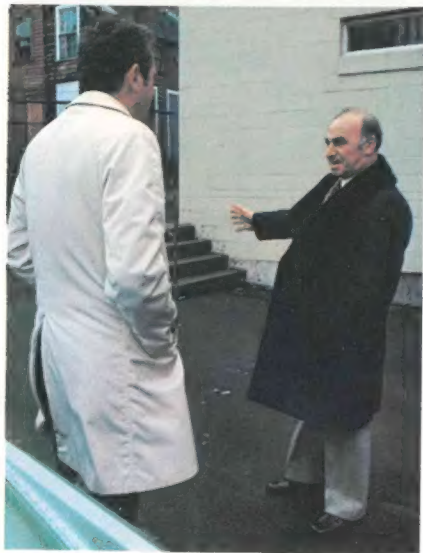
Remember: Use the antitheft device along with the other safeguards I've mentioned.

Q. Is there anything I can do now that will help get my car back if it's stolen?

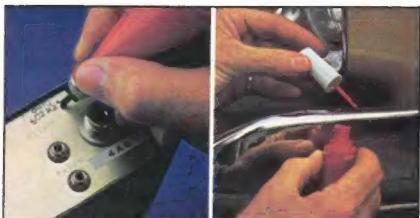
A. Sergeant Lamb told me that professional thieves usually alter identification numbers on stolen cars. So mark your car in several hard-to-find spots on the engine and body. Or drop a business card down the slot between the door and window.

If your stolen car is recovered, these things would help identify it.

Some people customize their car with pinstriping or unusual body



"It was sitting right here, in broad daylight," car-theft victim Abraham (Al) Rabinovitz told me. "Now I always lock the doors. I replaced the lock knobs with the tapered kind. And I make sure I always apply my kill switch."



How to "brand" your car and accessories

Call your local police department to find out if anyone in your area sponsors a free engraving-tool program. You can check out the free tool and engrave your car and accessories.

Mark your car in several hard-to-find spots on the engine and body. Mark your C.B., tape deck, hubcaps, and mag wheels in one obvious place and one hidden. Use your driver's license number and state for identification so you can be traced.

Even a spot of fingernail polish in the right place will help you claim your car if it's recovered.

paint. If stolen, it's harder to dispose of and easier for the police to spot.

Note: Don't keep your title or registration in the glove compartment unless your state law requires it. That makes it easier for the thief to sell the car.

Q. How can I keep parts of my car from being ripped off?

A. Auto strippers can strip a car naked right where it's parked. (See pictures, next page.) So take these precautions when you can:

1. If you must park on the street, look for a spot that will be well lighted and heavily trafficked at night. Plan ahead during the day.

2. Consider special locks for



1. Shell hired two experts to show you how fast car strippers can work – whether they do it in your driveway or haul your car off somewhere. 2. Wheels, radio, and battery disappear in 5 min. 42 sec. 3. Doors and front seat gone in 4:02. 4. A steal-to-order “nose job” and trunk lid finish the car – 8:47. Total time: 18 min. 31 sec. Can you fight back? See preceding page.

easy-to-steal parts like wheels, gas caps, and seats. A hood lock will help protect the engine and accessories, and help stop a thief from disabling some antitheft devices.

3. Write down your license plate number and check your plates now and then. If a thief stole yours for a hot car, he would probably substitute stolen plates on your car. That could be embarrassing.

Q. How can I keep my car safer in a parking lot?

A. Take the advice of Sergeant Lamb and my car thief consultant.

- Don't tell an attendant how long you'll be unless you have to.
- Leave only the ignition key with him. That will make it harder for someone to rob your trunk.
- Write down your speedometer and

fuel gauge readings on your claim check — in full view of the attendant if possible. Check your readings when you return to make sure no one has driven your car somewhere and



You can temporarily immobilize your car by removing the ignition high-tension lead from the distributor to the coil. **Warning: Engine off to avoid shock. Pull it off gently from each end and take it with you.**

Use this tip when your car will be unattended for a long time. If you're not sure how to do it, ask your service station dealer for help.

switched parts. This *does* happen.

- Take the claim check with you. Ideally, your car can't be removed from the lot without it.

Q. How can I keep thieves from stealing things out of my car?

A. Luggage, packages, or purses sitting in your car are just "begging to be stolen." Take the trouble to lock them in the trunk.

On vacation your out-of-state license plates are a dead giveaway that the trunk's full. When you stop at night, unload the car.

Mount C.B. radios, tape decks, and telephones out of sight. Whenever possible, take them with you. Use slide-in-and-out mounting and a portable antenna for easy removal. Or lock them in the trunk. (If you drive a truck you can install a lockbox with a case-hardened padlock in the bed and store them there.)

A trick that sometimes works for C.B. radios: Mount a bracket *without* a C.B. under the dash in plain sight. Hang ragged antenna and power leads out from the dash. Why bother to break into a vehicle if the radio has already been ripped off?

Q. Now that I've protected my car, how can I protect myself while I'm in it?

A. Park in a well-lighted area. When you walk to your car, have your keys ready to unlock the door. Check the back seat before you get in.

Keep doors locked and windows rolled up most of the way while you drive. If someone tries to force his way in, honk the horn repeatedly.



If your car is stolen, report it immediately. Vital information you give the police could help them recover it. Keep a record of these facts at home with this free Vehicle Identification Form. Write: Vehicle Identification Form, Shell Oil Company, P.O. Box 61609, Houston, Texas 77208.

Know safe spots along your daily routes — like all-night gas stations, groceries, police or fire stations. If you're followed, don't go home. Drive instead to one of your safe spots.

Some tips on auto-theft insurance

Auto-theft coverage is usually included under *Comprehensive Auto Insurance*. Check the policy for these things:

1. Is coverage full or is there a deductible?
2. Does it cover items stolen from the car? Or stolen *with* it?
3. Does it provide for a rental car if your car is stolen?
4. Insurance usually covers only the *average* value of your car when it was stolen. If you feel your car is worth more because of special equipment or unusually good condition, ask for *Stated Amount Coverage*. The extra cost may be worth it.

Attract attention by blinking the lights and honking.

At night, stay on well-traveled, well-lighted streets, even if it means going out of your way.

If your car breaks down, tie a white rag to the door handle, open the hood, and get back in the car. Lock all the doors and roll up the windows. If someone stops to help, don't unlock the door, just ask him to

call the police. (For more information write Shell for *The Breakdown Book*, a free survival manual for car trouble on the road.)

Q. Any more questions?

A. Write me if you have any questions or suggestions about preventing car crime. Write: Al Brooks, Shell Oil Company, P.O. Box 61609, Houston, Texas 77208.



How to get more answers from Shell. Get all the books in the Answer Series. They're free at many Shell Dealers. Or write Shell Answer Books, P.O. Box 61609, Houston, Texas 77208. Watch for more books on new subjects coming out soon.


**Come to
Shell for answers**